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Towards global partnerships

Letter dated 30 September 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations and Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the annual ministerial meeting of the least developed countries, held in New York, on 27 September 2013 (see annex).

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I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 (a) and (b), 22 (a), 23, 24, 25 and 26, as contained in document A/C.2/68/L.1.

(*Signed*) Jean-Francis **Zinsou**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Benin to the United Nations
Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau
of the Least Developed Countries

Annex to the letter dated 30 September 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations and Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries addressed to the Secretary-General

Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries

New York, 27 September 2013

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the least developed countries, having met in New York on 27 September 2013 to provide strategic guidance for the full, effective and timely implementation of the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, which calls upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to integrating and implementing the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/46 of 26 July 2013 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Welcoming with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[1] and his report on a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries,[2]

Welcoming also with appreciation the flagship report of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on the state of the least developed countries 2013, with the special theme "Productive capacity-building in least developed countries and the post-2015 development agenda",[3]

Taking note of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities, held on 23 September 2013,

Taking note also of the outcome of the special event of the President of the General Assembly to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, held on 25 September 2013,

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[1] A/68/88-E/2013/81.

[2] A/68/217.

[3] See the website of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (advanced unedited version will soon be available).

Welcoming with appreciation the convening, jointly by the Governments of Benin and Norway, of the high-level event on sustainable energy for the least developed countries at the level of Heads of State and Government on 23 September 2013, and its outcome,

Welcoming also with appreciation the convening of a ministerial breakfast meeting by the Governments of Turkey and Belgium on "Least Developed Country Graduation: The Way Towards Millennium Development Goal Acceleration, Sustainable Development and Structural Transformation" on 27 September 2013, and its outcome,

Taking note of the convening of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held in New York on 3 and 4 October 2013,

Adopt the following Declaration:

1. We reiterate our firm commitment to implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by integrating its provisions into our national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders. We, in cooperation with the United Nations country teams and other relevant stakeholders, will also broaden the existing country review mechanisms, including those for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of poverty reduction strategy papers, common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and the existing consultative mechanisms to cover the review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action;

2. We emphasize that the main thrust of the Istanbul Programme of Action is to build a critical mass of viable and competitive productive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services; diversification; and infrastructure development, enhanced investment and structural transformation in the least developed countries. We call upon the development partners to fulfil their existing commitments at the earliest in a predictable manner and provide additional financial and technical support to the least developed countries towards the implementation of the provisions of the Programme of Action;

3. We express our serious concern that the ongoing multiple crises affect least developed countries in many ways, which are manifested in the sharp decline in the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate from 6.6 per cent, on an annual average, during the past decade, to an estimated growth of 3.3 per cent in 2012.[1] The current economic growth is far below the target of 7 per cent annual growth set in the Istanbul Programme of Action. In that regard, we underline the need for appropriate regional and international support to be deployed in a timely and targeted manner to complement the efforts of the least developed countries aimed at building resilience in the face of economic shocks and mitigating their effects;

4. We emphasize the imperative need for strengthening the global partnership for development, encompassing the full range of actors, including traditional donors, countries of the South, civil society, the private sector and foundations, towards meeting the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action to overcome the structural challenges confronting the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation from the category by 2020;

5. We recognize that official development assistance (ODA) continues to be the largest source of external financing for the development of least developed countries and that it provides a buffer to weather the impacts of the unstable and volatile global economic environment. We express our serious concern that ODA as a percentage of the gross national product (GNP) of donors fell to 0.10 per cent in 2011 from 0.11 per cent in 2010. We are further concerned that as per the preliminary estimates for 2012, bilateral net ODA to least developed countries dropped by 12.8 per cent compared with 2011. We commend the countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that have already met the lower-bound of the ODA target and call upon the donor countries that have not yet done so to fulfil their ODA commitment of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNP to least developed countries at the earliest and to further increase the resources to the least developed countries while reviewing their ODA commitments in 2015, taking into account that the least developed countries are the group of countries most affected by the impacts of ongoing economic and financial crises;

6. We reiterate that the allocation of global ODA resources should take into account the structural handicaps and constraints that are unique to the least developed countries. We also call upon development partners to ensure the right balance in the allocation of ODA among various sectors, with particular focus on productive sectors, including infrastructure, agriculture and information and communications technology;

7. We stress the need for enhancing the quality of aid, including through transparency, accountability, long-term predictability and untying of aid for the least developed countries. We further emphasize that ODA should be channelled through national budgetary systems and should be aligned with national priorities based on the principle of national ownership and leadership in the development process;

8. We underline the importance of innovative sources of financing, which should be additional, substantial and predictable and disbursed in a manner that respects the priorities and special needs of the least developed countries and does not unduly burden them. We stress that governance structures for innovative financing programmes should have a balanced representation of funding Governments and agencies, and recipients, including least developed countries, and also ensure adequate accountability mechanisms;

9. We underline the need to ensure that the interests of the least developed countries are given due priority in the future work of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In that regard, we take note of the decisions undertaken in favour of the least developed countries at the Eighth Ministerial Conference, held in Geneva from 15 to 17 December 2011, concerning accession by least developed countries,[4] extension of the transition period for least developed countries under article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement[5] and the services waiver for least developed countries;[6]

10. We welcome the adoption of the new guidelines by the WTO General Council to further strengthen, streamline and operationalize the 2002 guidelines on the accession of least developed countries, with a view to enabling least developed

[4] See WTO document WT/COMTD/LDC/19.

[5] See WTO document IP/C/59/Add.2.

[6] See WTO document TN/S/37.

countries to negotiate WTO membership more quickly and easily. We also welcome the decision of the Council for TRIPS of 11 June 2013 on the extension of the transition period for least developed countries until 1 July 2021 under article 66.1, which will allow them more time to implement the TRIPS Agreement, while making full use of the flexibilities provided therein.[7] Similarly, we welcome the updated WTO work programme for least developed countries adopted by the WTO Subcommittee on Least Developed Countries, which mainstreams the Istanbul Programme of Action into the WTO mandate;[8]

11. We welcome the initiatives taken by some countries in providing duty-free, quota-free market access to all products from all the least developed countries. However, we recognize that full implementation of duty-free, quota-free access is yet to be achieved and the least developed countries have not been able to meaningfully benefit from the global trading system owing to restrictive market entry conditions and supply-side constraints. In that regard, we call upon the Member States to:

(a) Realize full and timely implementation of the decision to provide duty-free, quota-free market access, on a lasting basis, for all products originating from all least developed countries, which should be accomplished in a manner that does not diminish the existing market access enjoyed by any least developed country; adopt simple, transparent and flexible preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries;[9] and resist protectionist tendencies and rectify trade-distorting measures, including in agriculture, that are inconsistent with multilateral obligations;

(b) Address non-tariff measures and eliminate arbitrary or unjustified non-tariff barriers;

(c) Facilitate and accelerate negotiations with acceding least developed countries based on the accession guidelines adopted by the WTO General Council in December 2002 and the decision adopted at the General Council in July 2012 to further strengthen, streamline and operationalize those guidelines;

(d) Define and agree on details of the monitoring procedure for duty-free, quota-free market access and the rules of origin;

12. We call upon the WTO members to conclude the Doha Round of trade negotiations early, with an ambitious, comprehensive, balanced, equitable and development-oriented outcome, and strongly call for a consensus on the least developed country package at the upcoming ministerial meeting, scheduled to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 6 December 2013, that incorporates major development issues of least developed countries, including enhanced duty-free, quota-free market access, simple and flexible preferential rules of origin, operationalization of the services waiver and cotton;

13. We also call upon development partners to respond to trade-capacity needs of the least developed countries by significantly increasing the share of assistance through the Aid for Trade initiative and support for the Enhanced

[7] See WTO document IP/C/64.

[8] See WTO document WT/COMTD/LDC/W/57.

[9] See "Least developed country package for Bali", communication of 31 May 2013 for the ninth WTO Ministerial Conference (WTO document TN/C/W/63).

Integrated Framework and strengthening their capacity to access available resources, in support of the needs and demands of the least developed countries expressed through their national development strategies, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

14. We express our deep concern that in spite of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, many least developed countries still struggle with a high debt burden. We stress the need to undertake effective measures, in particular through full cancellation of multilateral and bilateral debts owed by all the least developed countries to creditors, both public and private. We also underscore the need for appropriate debt workouts and debt standstill for the least developed countries;

15. We recognize that foreign direct investment (FDI) can play an important and catalytic role in augmenting domestic savings, employment generation, technology transfer and entrepreneurship development. We commit ourselves to undertake a stable economic, legal and institutional framework in order to attract FDI and strongly call upon the development partners to establish an investment promotion regime in the least developed countries, including through provisions such as insurance, guarantees and preferential financing programmes and private enterprise funds for investment in least developed countries, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action. In that regard, we look forward to the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration at its sixty-ninth session;[10]

16. We recognize the importance of remittances to the least developed countries as significant private financial resources. We underline the need for reducing the transaction cost of remittance flows and fostering the development impact of remittances. We call upon the international community to work towards simplifying migration procedures to reduce the cost of outward migration and also call upon all countries, especially the destination countries, to resist unfair and discriminatory treatment of migrant workers and the imposition of unreasonable restrictions on labour migration, developing a system of short-term migration; protect the human rights of all migrants, including the right to access health care and education; eliminate migrant exploitation, including human trafficking; address the plight of stranded migrants; improve public perceptions of migrants; integrate migration into the development agenda; enhance migration partnerships and cooperation; and provide preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of least developed countries. We also look forward to the full implementation of the outcome of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held in New York on 3 and 4 October 2013;

17. We welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Benin and the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries on 12 May 2011, during the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, on the establishment of the International Migrant Remittances Observatory for Least Developed Countries and, in that regard, we appreciate the completion of the study of the four pilot programme countries and look forward to the early operationalization of the Observatory;

[10] See General Assembly resolution 67/220, para. 15.

18. We welcome with appreciation the decision taken by various entities of the United Nations system, including the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), to mainstream the Istanbul Programme of Action and integrate its relevant provisions into their programmes of work and, in that regard, we reiterate our invitation to the governing bodies of all other United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to do the same in an expeditious manner, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates;

19. We recognize that the United Nations development system is challenged to meet the growing demands for more varied assistance by doing more, quicker and better. We invite all organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and international and regional financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by implementing scaled-up financial and technical cooperation programmes; to integrate the Programme of Action into their programmes of work; to participate fully in its review at the national, subregional, regional and global levels; and to include in their annual reports to their respective governing bodies and to the Economic and Social Council the progress made in that regard, as mandated by the Economic and Social Council in its 2013 resolution on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.[11] We underline the need for full implementation of the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which provides important guidelines for the funding, functioning and effectiveness of those activities;

20. We urge the development partners and all other relevant stakeholders to help to ensure access to, and the development, acquisition, transfer and diffusion of technologies, in particular environmentally sound technologies and the corresponding know-how, to the least developed countries and, in that context, we underline the increased need for technical and financial assistance to the least developed countries for strengthening their national innovation capacity, inter alia, through research and development;

21. We call for the early operationalization of a technology bank for least developed countries with its proposed three key components,[12] namely a patent

[11] See E/2013/L.10, para. 8.

[12] See the report of the Secretary-General on a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries (A/68/217).

bank, a science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism and a science and technology depository facility. We also stress the need for an agreement on its structure, functions, governance mechanism, funding and staffing arrangements and other relevant institutional matters during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. In that regard, while welcoming the offer from Turkey to host a technology bank dedicated to the least developed countries, we: (a) call upon the General Assembly to decide to establish the technology bank at its sixty-eighth session; (b) request the Secretary-General to move ahead with the follow-up actions to operationalize the technology bank; and (c) urge the international community to extend its generous support to the operationalization and smooth functioning of the technology bank;

22. We note with concern that the efforts made by the least developed countries towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals could not make substantial progress mainly owing, inter alia, to unmet ODA commitments, limited productive capacity, the growing debt burden, unfavourable market access conditions and inadequate FDI inflows. We call upon the development partners to enhance their support to the least developed countries to further accelerate the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and make further significant progress by 2020, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

23. We take note of the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the high-level political forum and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and underline the need for reflecting the challenges and priorities of the least developed countries at the heart and centre of the sustainable development goals and financing for sustainable development, in line with Rio Principle 6 and the provisions contained in paragraphs 34 and 181 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "The future we want", and to formulate the sustainable development goals in accordance with the principle of differential and preferential treatment to the least developed countries;

24. We underline that since the least developed countries are the most vulnerable countries and seriously off-track in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, their development priorities should be placed at the heart and centre of the post-2015 development agenda for its legitimacy and effectiveness. The eight priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, especially productive capacity-building, infrastructure and information and communications technology development, should be fully integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, we call upon the developed countries to review their ODA commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action with a view to further enhancing the resources for the least developed countries, as they are the most in need and their access to other sources of finance is limited, and invite other developing countries, consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action within the framework of South-South cooperation;

25. We emphasize the need to launch an intergovernmental negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda at the beginning of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, which should be adopted at a summit in September 2015;

26. We call for an open and inclusive consultation process, engaging all stakeholders, including the least developed countries, on the post-2015 development

agenda. We stress that the post-2015 development agenda shall carry forward the spirit of the Millennium Declaration with:

(a) Determination to build upon and carry forward the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with the aim of fully eradicating extreme poverty;

(b) Balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;

(c) Emphasis on inclusive, equitable and sustained economic growth and building productive capacity, aiming at effectively addressing all forms of inequalities and the factors underpinning them and achieving sustainable development;

(d) Focus on the global, regional and national dimensions of sustainable development in addressing the special needs and particular challenges of the least developed countries;

(e) Strengthened global partnership for the enhanced implementation of internationally agreed development goals and targets;

27. We are deeply concerned that the least developed countries continue to be vulnerable to a variety of shocks, including food, fuel, financial and economic crises, and natural disasters. We therefore underline the need for building the necessary resilience of the least developed countries to withstand various external and internal shocks and to mitigate their adverse effects. In that regard, we call upon the development partners to provide financial and technical support for the risk mitigation strategies of the least developed countries, such as national facilities for crisis mitigation and resilience, to strengthen their capacity to respond to the effects of economic shocks as committed to in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

28. We recognize with deep concern that the least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change. We express grave concern at the lack of progress in the current climate change negotiations and urge all parties to conclude the negotiations, with developed countries taking the lead, to cut emissions and provide adequate, predictable and additional financial and technological resources to the least developed countries. We call upon the developed countries to expedite the disbursement of fast-start finance for adaptation agreed to in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to ensure enhanced access for the least developed countries to that finance as well as access to green technology at an affordable cost. We also call for the full and timely operationalization of the Green Climate Fund with a goal of mobilizing USD 100 billion per year by 2020 and the promotion and facilitation of clean development mechanism projects in the least developed countries and addressing the needs of people displaced as a result of extreme weather events. We stress that the allocation of adaptation and mitigation funds should be additional to ODA commitments and should be fair, equitable and proportionate to the impact of climate change;

29. We call upon the development partners to fully implement their commitments made in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to assist the least developed countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and to effectively implement the Istanbul Programme of Action and fully integrate its priority areas into the framework for action, the broader implementation of which will contribute to the overarching goal

of the Programme of Action of enabling half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

30. We also call upon the international community to mainstream the priority agenda of the least developed countries into the debates and outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields;

31. We reiterate our call to the Secretary-General to include the issues of concern to the least developed countries in all relevant reports in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, in order to ensure follow-up of their development in the broader context of the world economy and contribute to preventing their marginalization while promoting their further integration into the world economy;

32. We reiterate our commitment to strengthen good governance, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and democratic participation, including by enhancing the role of parliaments, and to combat corruption;

33. We call for strengthened coordination and coherence among the United Nations system and all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions in supporting economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development in the least developed countries;

34. We invite the Economic and Social Council to include the review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in its annual ministerial reviews and the Development Cooperation Forum to continue reviewing trends in international development cooperation, as well as policy coherence for development, in particular for the least developed countries. We invite the Council to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in its annual ministerial review in 2015, with a view to identifying lessons learned and best practices as well as gaps and shortcomings in the implementation and outlining further courses of action to overcome them;

35. We note with concern that the least developed countries are seriously underrepresented and have not been given their due share in terms of voice and participation in the decision-making process of the Bretton Woods institutions. The voting system and accountability structure of the Bretton Woods institutions must undergo fundamental reform with a view to ensuring the effective voice and participation of the least developed countries in their decision-making processes. We reiterate our call for the recognition of the least developed countries as a specific category by the Bretton Woods institutions based on the United Nations vulnerability index, for the sake of the coordination and coherence of the international development cooperation;

36. We recognize that South-South and triangular cooperation have emerged and expanded significantly as a vital force in the world economic landscape. We stress that the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation for trade, investment, economic and technological cooperation should be fully harnessed as a real complement to, and not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. The Global System of Trade Preferences among developing countries needs to be further strengthened. We commend the increasing volume of development assistance and financial flows, technology transfer, and duty-free, quota-free market access being

provided by countries of the South to the least developed countries. We welcome such initiatives and call for other members in the South to do the same;

37. We underline that the least developed countries must enjoy full flexibility and policy space in determining their own macroeconomic policies. Such flexibility should enable them to effectively manage and regulate their domestic economic policy in the light of their national development strategies. We call upon the development partners that the national efforts of the least developed countries should be complemented by supportive global programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding the development opportunities of the least developed countries, while taking into account national conditions and ensuring respect for national ownership strategies and sovereignty;

38. We recall the ambitious goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action to enable half of the number of least developed countries to reach the stage of graduation by 2020 and commit to take the necessary steps to complete the graduation process. We underline that each instance of successful graduation will constitute an extraordinary success not only for the countries themselves, but also for the United Nations and for development cooperation by the international community. We are encouraged that notwithstanding persisting challenges and constraints, several least developed countries have announced their intention to reach the status of graduation by or around 2020. Countries such as Angola, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal and Rwanda, among others, have set graduation as a goal in their national development strategies. We call upon the United Nations system organizations, especially the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to extend the necessary technical support to the countries aspiring to graduation in developing their graduation and smooth transition strategies;

39. We call upon development partners, in line with General Assembly resolution 67/221 on smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries, to use the least developed country identification criteria, namely gross national income per capita, the human assets index and the economic vulnerability index, as aid allocation criteria in order to ensure a fairer aid allocation in view of their severe structural handicaps;

40. We strongly call upon development partners and all other relevant actors to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action in a timely manner by integrating it into their respective national cooperation policy frameworks, programmes and activities, to ensure enhanced, predictable and targeted support to the least developed countries, as set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action, and the delivery of their commitments, and to consider appropriate measures to overcome shortfalls or shortcomings, if any;

41. We invite the United Nations system, including the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, UNCTAD and the United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies, functional commissions and regional commissions, as well as other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and international and regional financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, to integrate it into their

programmes of work and to participate fully in its review at the national, subregional, regional and global levels. We also invite the United Nations Development Group to integrate the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action into its workplans;

42. We recognize that the nine pillars (infrastructure, human resources development, trade, private investment and job creation, food security, growth with resilience, financial inclusion, domestic resource mobilization and knowledge-sharing) of the Multi-Year Action Plan on Development of the Development Working Group of the Group of 20 (G20) are of great importance for the least developed countries and call upon the G20 countries to accord special priority to the challenges confronting the least developed countries and fulfil their respective commitments to them. We call upon the G20 countries to ensure the voice and active participation of the least developed countries in all their activities;

43. We call upon the Group of Eight (G8) countries to give due consideration to the least developed country agenda, to take appropriate measures to ensure that the concerns of the least developed countries are duly taken into account in their decisions, and to fulfil their commitments in order to ensure the accelerated implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and reach all its objectives;

44. We appreciate those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Least Developed Countries, which have facilitated the participation of the least developed country delegates in the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, including its preparatory process. We invite Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute to the Trust Fund to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action and to ensure the participation of two representatives from each least developed country in the annual review of the Istanbul Programme of Action, held in July each year during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council;

45. We take note with appreciation of the biennial regional review meetings organized by ESCAP and ECA on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective regions and invite them to further enhance their support to the implementation of the Programme of Action, including with respect to economic diversification and structural transformation;

46. We express our deep appreciation to the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for its rigorous and high-quality follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action as the focal point for the least developed countries in the United Nations system and its substantive support to the work of the group of least developed countries. The Office should continue to provide analytical and organizational support to the least developed countries in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals and perform the coordinating role within the United Nations system on the issue of graduation. We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring adequate resources for the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to enable it to fulfil its wide and growing activities and stress that the Office should be strengthened commensurate with its increased mandate accorded by the Istanbul Programme of Action and the General Assembly in its resolution 67/220. In

that regard, we fully endorse the proposal of the Secretary-General on strengthening the Office contained in his proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015;

47. We stress the importance of Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/46, paragraph 28 of which states that the activities relating to least developed countries carried out within the United Nations Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure effective monitoring and follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and to provide well-coordinated support with a view to effectively realizing the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including the goal of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020. In that regard, we invite the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly for its consideration during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly;

48. We welcome the offer of the Government of Benin to host a ministerial meeting on "New partnership for productive capacity-building in the least developed countries" in Cotonou, Benin, during the first quarter of 2014 and look forward to a successful outcome, which will contribute to the midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action as well as the post-2015 development agenda;

49. We resolve to uphold our common aspiration of ensuring sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all least developed countries leading to our ultimate goal of graduation from the least developed country category. We will continue to maintain our solidarity and unity and pursue a common position on issues relating to our interests in various multilateral forums.